

CPYRGHT

These Days Beware!

By George E. Sokolsky

Sen. Thomas J. Dodd, of Connecticut, calls renewed attention to an old swindle. The swindle is a very simple one. No Communist country recognizes the right of private ownership of property. Therefore parcels or money sent to that country are the property of the government just as everything else is.



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Certain modifications of property ownership have developed in recent years, but they are subject to government negation without trial.

The General Parcel and Travel Company at 135 West 14th st. is the agency that handles the transfer of American gifts to Russians. The predecessor of this agency was Jacob Golos who was a spy, using a travel agency as a cover. Sen. Dodd said of this agency:

"While the director of General Parcel, Mr. Leonid Tankel, is an American citizen, and while the company is incorporated under American law, there is little doubt that it was created by Intourist especially for the purpose of serving as its representative in the area of parcel remittances to the Soviet Union. General Parcel and Travel Company has 12 branch offices in various parts of the country. The directors of these branches are American citizens, for the most part refugees themselves, who enjoy friendly relations with the refugee and immigrant community be-

cause they are considered non-Communists."

ACCORDING to Sen. Dodd, although the heavy duties have been prepaid in this country, almost 6000 parcels have been returned to the United States from Soviet Russia on the grounds that the duty on the contents had not been prepaid. Who got the money? Why are some parcels rotting in the New York Post Office and elsewhere? The money was paid by the sender but this was denied by the carrier who received the money.

This question has arisen for many years. Relatives in this country discover that parcels they sent to Soviet Russia never arrived at their destination. There is really nothing anyone can do about it, except to send another parcel of food or clothing or whatever gift one wishes to give.

Sen. Dodd says:

"I do not know at what point in the transmission line the prepaid duties disappeared. The money may very well have disappeared in the office of the General Parcel and Travel Company, and not in the Intourist office. But I feel that this is a situation in which the Soviet authorities should voluntarily assume responsibility for the actions of their hand-chosen contractual agent in this country."

I think this is rather naive because under Russian law, such parcels as Sen. Dodd describes are private property and are therefore subject to government confiscation in Soviet Russia. Why should one be surprised that this happens? Since the ear-

liest days, Soviet Russia has been confiscating private property which it does not recognize as lawful. Why not do so now? Why permit Russians to believe that Americans have superior consumers' goods?

IT IS the proper function of the United States Post Office and the Treasury to investigate the activities not only of the General Parcel and Travel Company but Intourist to make sure that Americans who prepay for services get what they pay for. As all Russian companies are owned by the Russian government. When a problem arises concerning them, the inquiry becomes a diplomatic incident because what has to be investigated is the Russian government.

This then is a serious matter. For instance, what happens if an American leaves a bequest to a relative in Russia? Who gets the money? Usually, the Russian government gets the money or the property.

This entire procedure needs to be investigated very thoroughly so that American citizens are not gypped under the peculiar Soviet property system. The Russians have a right to pursue any system of private property they choose, but they are not entitled to steal money or goods sent from this country.

Sen. Dodd has hit on a very interesting subject which ought to give the congressional committee of which he is a member an opportunity for interesting study.

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